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Committee for Programme and Coordination
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9 June to 3 July 2003
Agenda item 9
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-third session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Jerry **Kramer** (Canada)

Addendum

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Results approach in the United Nations: implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration"

Agenda item 6

1. At its 2nd meeting, on 9 June 2003, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled: "Results approach in the United Nations: implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration" (A/57/372 and Corr.1), as well as the comments of the Secretary-General and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) thereon (A/57/372/Add.1).

2. Inspector Doris Bertrand introduced the JIU report and responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee. A representative of the CEB secretariat introduced the report containing the comments of the Secretary-General and CEB thereon.

Discussion

3. The Committee recalled that, in its resolution 57/303, the General Assembly had taken note with appreciation of the JIU report and had referred it to the Committee for its consideration. It was pointed out that part I of the report, dealing with results-based management, results-based budgeting and planning in the context of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 and the medium-term plan for

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the period 2002-2005 had been discussed by the Fifth Committee at the resumed fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

4. The Committee appreciated the effort made by the inspector, noting that the report highlighted important conceptual elements and that it was timely and the issues relevant. Inspector Bertrand was congratulated for having taken up extremely complex issues in a wide-ranging report, addressing a multiplicity of issues, including results-based budgeting for implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration; achieving better system-wide coordination at the country level; more effective follow-up of the outcomes of summits and conferences; mutual accountability issues; and monitoring and reporting processes.

5. The Committee felt that the report was nevertheless complex and not readily accessible, and put forward recommendations that were too sweeping and ambitious and not practical.

6 Part I of the report, dealing with results-based management of the United Nations, raised the question of the efficacy of the current results-based budgeting, planning and programming instruments, and recommended steps that needed to be taken to improve them. Interest was shown in elements of recommendations 1 and 2, especially as they pertained to improving the capacity of the Secretariat for implementing results-based budgeting through training and related measures. Reference was made to the need to fully implement General Assembly resolution 55/231 on results-based budgeting.

7. The view was expressed that the exact meaning of the words "programmes and activities" in paragraph 12 of the report was not clear and that paragraphs 28 and 29 also seemed to dilute the value of the concept of "results" itself. The view was expressed that, taking into account paragraphs 8 and 9 of General Assembly resolution 55/231, the expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement should be properly stated as those attainable by the Organization.

8. The Committee, while recognizing the need to further improve the strategic value of the medium-term plan, considered that it remained the principal programmatic policy directive of the United Nations, which could not be replaced by the new instruments proposed by the inspector since the Organization needed a strategic framework linked to the budget process. The view was expressed concerning the relevance of maintaining the medium-term plan and the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. It was recalled that results-based budgeting had been the subject of exhaustive examination in the Committee for Programme and Coordination and had led to revision of the Regulations and Rules. That process had culminated in the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 55/231, which was the legislative mandate for its implementation.

9. As to part II of the JIU report and its recommendations, the Committee was of the opinion that those issues did not warrant further action but contained elements that could be drawn upon by Member States and secretariats as they addressed related issues. The Committee concurred with the statement of CEB that the report would influence future thinking within the United Nations system on the wide range of issues and concerns it covered.

10. Delegations emphasized the merit of applying a results-based approach in the context of the biennial budget, and stressed the importance of expressing accomplishments and measures of achievement in less general terms in order to make them more specific in terms of what the Secretariat was accountable for.

11. The view was expressed that recommendations 3 to 8 required caution and seemed to be too ambitious. In particular, concerning recommendation 3 one delegation shared the observation of CEB in paragraph 11 of its report (A/57/372/Add.1). As to recommendation 8, the delegation pointed out that option 1 of recommendation 8 contradicted with the direction taken in the initiative by the Secretary-General presented in 2002.

12. The need for JIU to provide more focused reports was emphasized. It was questioned whether the JIU method of work was conducive to meeting the expectation of Member States and suggested a need for independent assessment of whether the system produced results commensurate with its cost.

Conclusions and recommendations

13. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly:

(a) Take note of recommendations 1 and 2, while recognizing the shared responsibility of the Secretary-General and Member States in the design of a results-based budgeting format and the prerogative of the General Assembly to approve any change to the results-based budgeting format in the medium-term plan. In that regard, the Committee recognizes the need for further training for programme managers to better implement the results-based budgeting approach in the United Nations system.

(b) Take note of recommendations 3 to 8; the Committee considers that they are not appropriate at this stage for further action, bearing in mind doubts about their feasibility and practicability.

14. The Committee recommends that JIU be urged to make additional efforts to improve the presentation and formats of its reports in order to make them more focused, concise and reader friendly, and also recommends that the General Assembly review those ongoing efforts during its fifty-eighth session.

15. The Committee notes that the General Assembly has taken note with appreciation of the JIU report and the comments of the Secretary-General and CEB thereon.